



OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS
IDAHO STATE LEGISLATURE

OPE Update

Message from the Director

Mission:
Promote
confidence
and
accountability
in state
government

Since joining the Office of Performance Evaluations (OPE) in December, my staff and I have placed a great deal of emphasis on being responsive to the Legislature. While we recognize the importance of doing independent and objective work, we are also working to be responsive to the information needs of lawmakers.

During the 2003 legislative session, we met frequently with legislative leadership, germane committees, and individual legislators. We also have

worked to strengthen relationships with the Governor's Office, the Division of Financial Management, Budget and Policy Analysis, and Legislative Audits.

This is the first issue of this newsletter. Our goal is to maintain open communication with the Legislature and others. Please contact us anytime to request evaluation work, share your ideas, or let us know how we may better serve you.

National Recognition

The office received a 2003 impact award from the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society for the review of data management at the Commission of Pardons and Parole and the Department of Correction.

OPE recommendations relating to the acquisition of an offender management software package resulted in *savings of at least \$100,000*. Recommendations

led the Commission of Pardons and Parole to improve data management and strengthen communication with the Department of Correction.

Paul Headlee and Lewissa Swanson worked on this project. Eric Milstead, a legislative budget analyst who previously worked for the office, served as team lead.

Inside this issue:

Projects in Progress	2
Projects Completed	3
Professional Involvement	4

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee (JLOC)

Sen. Shawn Keough, Co-chair
Sen. John Andreason
Sen. Bert Marley
Sen. Marti Calabretta

Rep. Margaret Henbest, Co-chair
Rep. Maxine Bell
Rep. Debbie Field
Rep. Donna Boe

Projects In Progress...

The following evaluation reports are scheduled to be released by the start of the 2004 legislative session.

Staff are visiting 23 school districts as part of the public education reviews.

School District Administration and Pupil Transportation

The office is currently conducting two public education evaluations—one relating to school district administration and the other to pupil transportation. Staff have been busy conducting site visits of 23 school districts.

- School District Administration: *Basin, Boise, Grangeville, Lake Pend Oreille, Lewiston, Meridian, Moscow, Murtaugh, Preston, Wallace, and Wilder*
- Pupil Transportation: *American Falls, Boise, Coeur d'Alene, Council, Filer, Garden Valley, Idaho Falls, Madison, Meridian, Nampa, Payette, Post Falls, St. Maries, and Twin Falls*

To assist with the review, OPE has contracted with two consultants:

- Stephen Smith, manager of the National Conference of State Legislatures' Center on Education Finance, is doing multi-state research on school district administrative practices.
- Bob Thomas, formerly with the Washington Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, is reviewing the reimbursement funding formula for pupil transportation in Idaho and other states. He is also reviewing school bus purchasing practices.

Higher Education Residency Requirements

Staff are in the process of completing a review of higher education residency requirements. As part of the review, evaluators are comparing Idaho's residency laws with other states and assessing university compliance with

Idaho's requirements. Staff recently completed fieldwork at Boise State University, University of Idaho, Idaho State University, and Lewis-Clark State College.

Follow-up Reviews

Staff are following up on agency efforts to address OPE recommendations from five previous studies. The follow-up work relates to Idaho's Medicaid program, the

Department of Environmental Quality's air permitting program, the Idaho Child Care Program, state agency passenger vehicle management, and public works contractor licensing.

Projects Completed

During the 2003 legislative session, the office released six reports, which are available on the website at www.state.id.us/ope.

Overview of School District Revenues and Expenditures, April 2003

In response to a request from legislative leadership, staff prepared a report during the 2003 legislative session summarizing school district revenues and expenditures. Together, Idaho's 114 school districts spent \$1.47 billion in fiscal year 2002 for the day-to-day costs of educating 246,415 students and operating schools. The state contributed approximately \$987 million to support Idaho's public schools that year.

The report provided comparative information about school district costs for instruction, administration, pupil transportation, and other functions. Lawmakers used the report to help identify areas for more in-depth review. After receiving input from legislative leadership, education committees, and individual legislators, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee directed OPE to study school district administration and pupil transportation.

The report on school district revenues and expenditures assisted lawmakers in identifying areas for further review.

Programs for Incarcerated Mothers, February 2003

The report concluded that programs offered for incarcerated mothers and their children at Department of Correction facilities are similar to those available in other states surveyed.

Research showed there was limited information available on the effectiveness of such programs in Idaho and other states.

Return of Unused Medications from Assisted Living Facilities, January 2003

Return of unused medications from assisted living facilities could result in cost savings to the state's Medicaid program and residents. However, Idaho statutes and rules prohibited the return of any unused medicines from these facilities.

The report identified changes needed to allow for the return of unused medications. Lawmakers subsequently passed a concurrent resolution directing the Board of Pharmacy and the Department of Health and Welfare to begin working on needed changes.

Staff identified steps needed to allow the return of unused medications, which could save money for Idaho's Medicaid program and residents of assisted facilities.

Data Management at the Commission of Pardons and Parole and the Department of Correction, Follow-up Review, February 2003

Both the Commission of Pardons and Parole and the Department of Correction have made progress on implementing all nine

recommendations resulting from the May 2001 performance evaluation of their data management.

Agency Response to Management of State Agency Passenger Vehicles, Follow-up Review, February 2003

Staff

- **Director:**
Rakesh Mohan
- **Adm. Assistant:**
Margaret Campbell
- **Evaluators:**
A.J. Burns
Paul Headlee
Jim Henderson
Ned Parrish
Chris Shoop
Lewissa Swanson

Most state agencies reported that they are in the process of implementing, or plan to implement, OPE recommendations regarding passenger vehicle management. Many agencies reported taking steps to implement recommendations related to vehicle maintenance, repair, and disposal. However, fewer agencies have addressed key recommendations regarding management of vehicle use. More widespread adoption of these

recommendations could lead to cost savings. For example, the Department of Health and Welfare, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Industrial Commission reported a total of nearly ***\$1.1 million in savings*** as a result of implementing vehicle use recommendations from a 1998 OPE study on vehicle management. JLOC requested additional follow-up of agency efforts in time for the 2004 legislative session.

Department of Environmental Quality: Timeliness and Funding of Air Quality Permitting Programs, Follow-up Review, February 2003

Staff found that the Department of Environmental Quality has made some progress in implementing recommendations from the June 2002 evaluation of its air quality permitting

programs, but a number of recommendations still need to be addressed. JLOC directed the office to conduct additional follow-up prior to the 2004 legislative session.

Professional Involvement

As part of the mission to promote confidence and accountability in state government, Rakesh Mohan has shared information about the office's role and work with other professionals through presentations and articles.

Presentations

"Legislative Program Evaluation: Where the Public Sector Leads in Quality," 10th Annual Spring Quality Conference, Boise, June 3, 2003.

"Maximizing Independence and Responsiveness for Impact," Idaho Fiscal Officer's Association Meeting, Boise, June 11, 2003.

"Office of Performance Evaluations: An Introduction," Council of District Financial Officers Meeting, Boise, July 16, 2003.

Articles

"Surviving My First Legislative Session," NLPES News (a newsletter of the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society), Spring/Summer 2003, www.ncsl.org/programs.nlpes.

"OPE Adopts a New Mantra for Success," Legislative Perspective, June 2003, www.state.id.us/legislat.

Semiannual Newsletter

Office of Performance Evaluations Idaho State Legislature

J. R. Williams Office Building
700 West State Street, Suite 10
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0055

Phone: 208-334-3880
Fax: 208-334-3871
Email: opeinfo@state.id.us

WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.STATE.ID.US/OPE